(ii) Two dry docks at Netaji Subhas Dock in Calcutta along with an adja- cent area have bun leased out for ship repair facilities at Calcutta DockSystem.

Proposal to improve National Highways in Bihar

5598. SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANS PORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal to improve national highways passu ing through Bihar during the current year;

(b) whether there is also a proposal to connect Patna to Muzzafarpur which is at a distance of about severity five kilometers, with the national highways going to Nepal; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) Yes, Sir. The Annual Plan 1995-96 provides for the improvement works amounting to Rs. 161.00 crores proposed to be taken up on National Highways in Bihar;

(b) and (c) No, Sir. At present there is no such proposal under consideration of the Government.

Reported poor condition of roads

5599. SHRI T. VENKATRAM REDDY:

SHRI G. PRATHAPA REDDY:

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned, "Dangerous roads deter NRI investor's, appearing in the Times of India dated the 9th January, 1995;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) *to* (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table the House.

Delay in execution of work pertainjng to National highways 17 and 48

5600. SHRI T. VENKATRAM REDDY:

SHRl G. PRATHAPA REDDY:

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the abnormal delay in sanc tioning administrative approval and financial assistance, even for the ap proved works in the Ministry of Surface Trasport;

(b) if so,, the number of such works pending execution and since when; and

(c) the reasons for delay in execu tion of the work of construction of a new bridge across river Netjierapathi on National Highway 48 at Panem-angalore and a new bridge across river Sharavathi on National Highway 17 at Honnavar?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) and (b) Administrative approval and financial sanction for the works included in the Annual Plans is a continuous activity and is subject to availability of funds and inter-se priority of works. Execution of works by States is followed by a tendering procedure for selec-tion of contractors.

(c) The work of construction of a new bridge across river Netheravathi on NH-48 has been sanctioned and the State PWD have already been advised to award the work to the selected contractor. The proposal to construct a new bridge across river

Sharav.athi on NH-17 at Honnavar has been deferred for the time being. Instead repairs to the existing bridge at a cost of Rs. 6.75 crores have been sanctioned and the State PWD have been advised to get the repaid works started immediately.

Introduction of a modified Cargo suport Scheme

5601. SHRI SANGH PRIYA GAUTAM: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state;

(a) whether there is any proposal to introduce a modified cargo support scheme;

(b) if so, the basic objectives of the scheme;

(c) whether the scheme is likely to resuJt in earning and saving foreign exchange;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) by when the scheme is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The) Government have approved a Modified Cargo Support Scheme with the basic objective of providing, in a phased manner. 40 per cent of liner cargo in terms of value (freight) moving from/to India, to the Indian shipping lines.

(c) and (d) The share of the Indian lines in India's overseas liner trade for the year 1993-94 is about 13 per cent which is intended to be increased to 40 per cent. India's exports are projected to increase substantially in future and as it is, India is a net importer of sea transport services in its overseas trade with a huge outgo of freight payable to foreign flag operators, more particularly in liner trade. Overall, therefore, with the increase in the share of Indian ships, with effective implementation of the Modified Cargo Support Scheme, there are bound to be tremendous savings of foreign exchange for the country.

(e) The Indian National Shipowners' Association ha,s been chosen as the nodal agency to coordinate through consitution of a Committee called the 'Committee on Liner Cargo Allocation' (COLCA) at the major ports with representatives from Indian shipping lines and shippers/Exporters Association for implementation of this Scheme. Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) and Indian National Shipowners' Association have reported that in a preliminary meeting held between SCI and Western India Shippers' Association at Bombay the Shippers/Exporters generally assured to give full support to the Scheme.

Improvement in the infrastructural facilities in ports

5602. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that volume of traffic handled at the coun try's ports has increased at an annual rate of 5.3 per cent over the last four decades;

(b) whether it is also a fact that port infrastructure in the country is hardly capable of meeting the in creasing traffic and calls for consider able improvement;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps being taken to up grade these ports to meet the grow ing needs of the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) The volume of cargo traffic handled by all the Major Ports in the country has increased at an annual compound rate of 6 per cent over the last four decades.

(b) to (d) No, Sir. The available port infrastructure is quite capable